

nsw racehorse owners

BY SHARON HUNT
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A 'NEW KID ON THE BLOCK' – HARDLY!

When a 'vacancy' occurs at the top of any organisation, talk usually centres on who the 'New Kid on the Block' will be.

However, when this situation arose at

NSW Racehorse Owners Association in October, the 'new kid' was none other than the existing vice-president, Ray McDowell, so the 'new kid syndrome' was never going to apply.

Mr McDowell was unanimously elected to take the reins of NSWROA following the resignation of Stephen van Eyk.

Mr McDowell, who has served on the NSWROA Committee since 2005 and was the Association's representative on the Racing Industry Participants Advisory Committee (RIPAC) at Racing NSW, said he was honoured to have been chosen to undertake the challenging role as NSWROA president.

Mr McDowell is a respected and successful racehorse owner with over 35 years in the business.

Although he still considers himself as just an average owner, readers might recall that he was a co-owner of one of our greatest middle-distance performers, Intergaze.

Everyone remembers Intergaze (Integra-Tempergaze (USA)) who was often referred to as the Giant Killer, primarily for his defeat of the champion galloper Octagonal at his last race start in the Queen Elizabeth Stakes at Royal Randwick.

But Intergaze was very much more than a one-hit wonder.

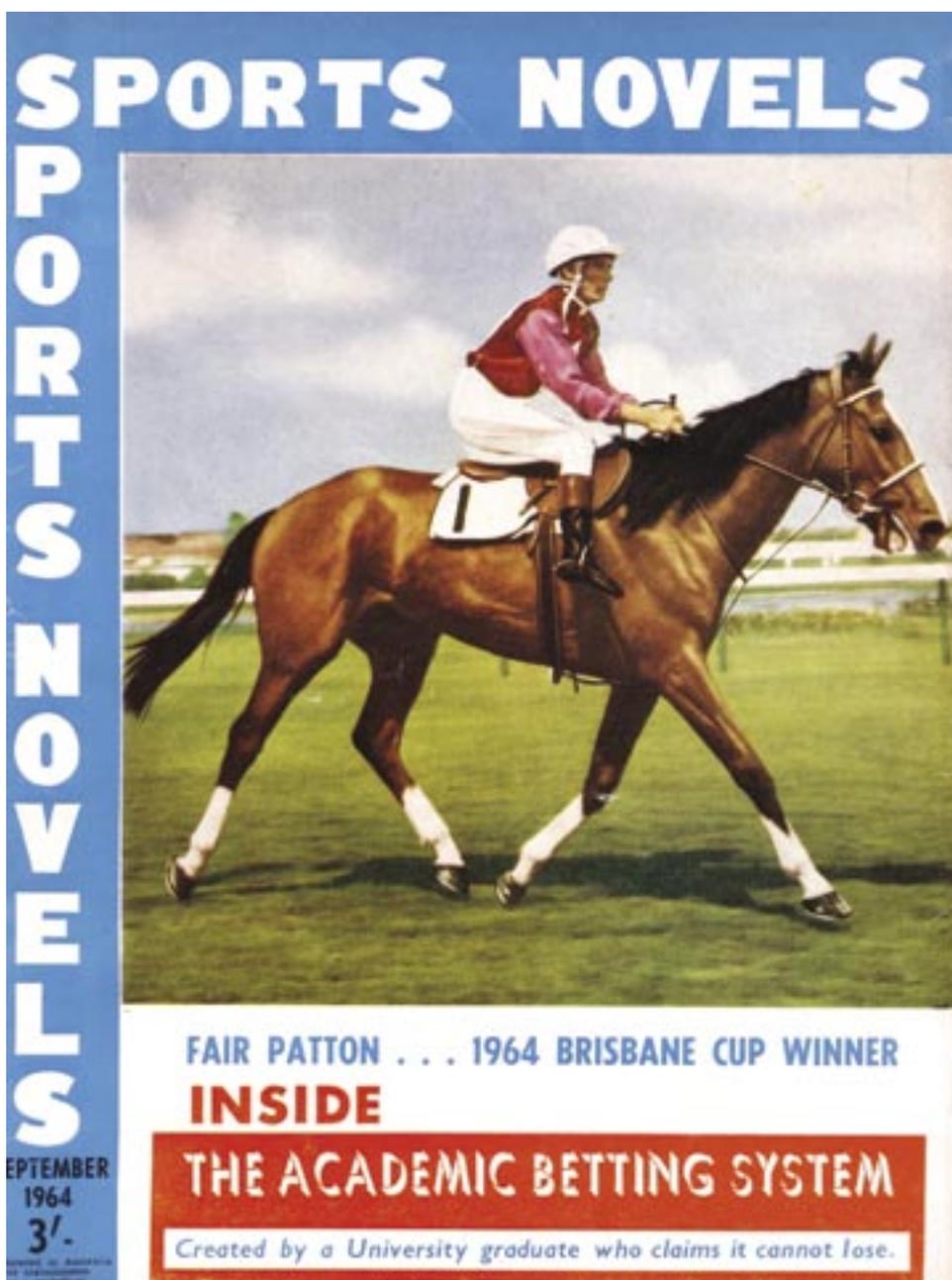
He was successful within the Black Type arena no less than 11 times – eight of those wins being at Group One level.

With some \$3.77million in prizemoney his Group One wins were recorded in the VRC Australia Cup, the VATC Underwood Stakes, the BTC Doomben Cup, the AJC Queen Elizabeth Stakes (twice), the AJC All-Aged Stakes, the STC Canterbury Guineas and the AJC Champagne Stakes.

Intergaze is now the sire of three Stakes-winners himself in Maybe Better (winner of the Group 3-MRC Coongy Handicap, the Gr 3-VRC Saab Quality and the Listed-VRC Japan Trophy Race), Gaze On (Listed-T L Baillieu Handicap) and Sir Sensible (Toowoomba Cup).

But I digress from the story at hand.

Ray first became involved with thoroughbreds at an early age primarily



Cover of a magazine showing one of Ray McDowell's favourite gallopers, Fair Patton

through his father's friendship with Vic Thompson Snr.

From the age of four, Ray would regularly attend the races with the parents who were great supporters of the stable.

Even though tender in years, Ray would painstakingly record all the 'big wins' for the stable. He fondly remembers Fair Patton (Patton (Ity)-Affair) as being one of the stars of the stable (and his favourite) who was victorious in the QTC Brisbane Cup (twice), the STC Lord Mayor's Cup (twice), the AJC Queen Elizabeth Stakes and the QTC P J O'Shea Stakes.

Ray, together with his brother Colin, first ventured into the ownership of a horse in their late teens.

Notwithstanding the horse's 'ability' his interest never waned from the thrill of racehorse ownership – in fact he says it still grows stronger every year.

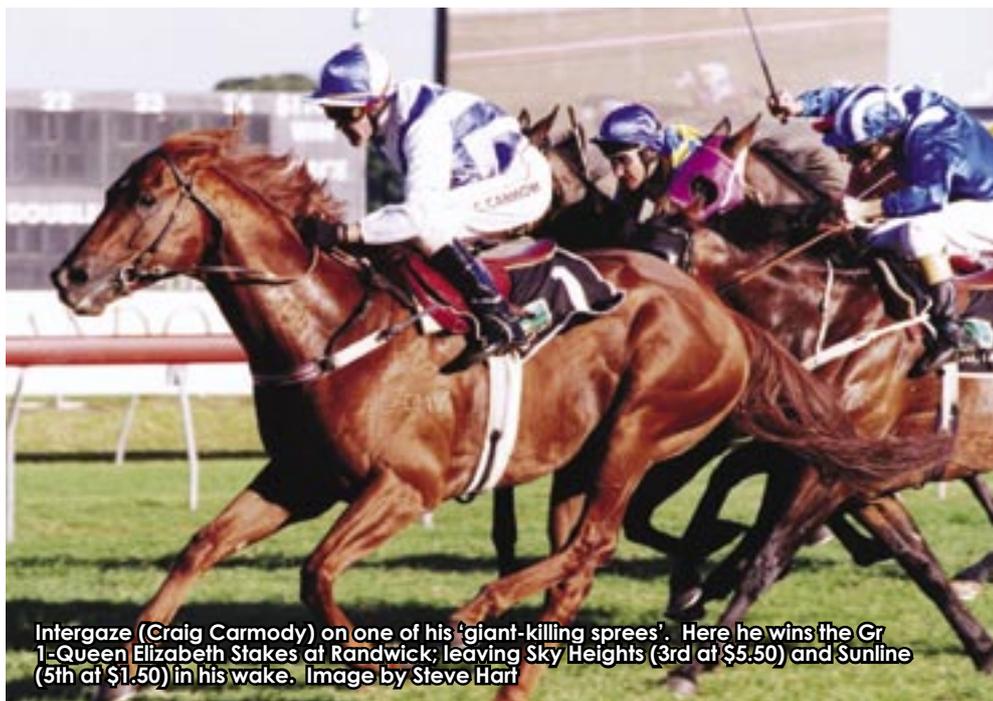
Having owned in excess of 50 thoroughbreds since that time trained firstly by Rod Craig and now Kevin Moses (city) and Kevin Lantry (country), he says that there will probably never be another Intergaze.

"I was extremely fortunate to have been associated with a horse like Intergaze and never in my wildest dreams did I think it would happen to me nor would I expect it to happen again. Although you never know what is around the next corner, do you?"

An avid fan of country racing, Ray is a regular traveller to the country race cups in Coffs Harbour, Grafton, Wagga and Newcastle each year.

Whilst trying hard not to show bias to one area over another, he does, however, have a 'soft spot' for the Coffs Harbour racing carnival having been a former vice-chairman of the Coffs Harbour Racing Club.

"The Coffs Harbour Cup meeting is the



Intergaze (Craig Carmody) on one of his 'giant-killing sprees'. Here he wins the Gr 1-Queen Elizabeth Stakes at Randwick; leaving Sky Heights (3rd at \$5.50) and Sunline (5th at \$1.50) in his wake. Image by Steve Hart

best country cup carnival in the State. It is a social event for all in town, both residents and businesses alike, as well as guests. If you can only attend one country cup meeting, my tip is to give Coffs a go – you'll love it."

This year Ray had a runner in the Coffs Harbour Cup, Intermac (Intergaze-Delicate Flight (NZ)) who is prepared by Kevin Lantry.

Intermac, who was also bred by Ray, finished fourth some 3.1 lengths behind the winner Belmonte who is a multiple Black Type winner.

Ray has also dabbled in the breeding side of the industry (breeding to race only), at one time having six broodmares but now only having one, the home-bred Bettymac (Charnwood Forest (Ire)-Delicate Flight (NZ)). Bettymac has had a couple of foals to Intergaze and we eagerly await their progress.

When asked what his vision for NSWROA was, Ray had no hesitation in saying: "To see owners acknowledged by the industry as the most important people in racing as they put on the show for all to enjoy."

He would also like to see unity in the industry, for the good of the industry and to enable it to go forward through the difficult times ahead.

Ray is firmly of the view that racing is not about gambling and making money, it is something for the whole family to enjoy, just like his own does using the races as a meeting point for family get-togethers.

His final words probably sum it up best "I just love it".

As any owner will surely confirm, owning a racehorse is an exciting experience. So why not give it a go?

If you are interested in participating in this wonderful sport and becoming a member of the NSW Racehorse Owners Association, simply visit our website - www.nswroa.com.au - or telephone the NSWROA office on (02) 9299 4299.

Membership applications are now being taken for the 2009 membership year.

In closing may I take this opportunity on behalf of the president and directors of NSWROA, of wishing all readers the compliments of the season.